

**ҚОҒАМДЫҚ-ГУМАНИТАРЛЫҚ ПӘНДЕРДІ ОҚЫТУ ТЕОРИЯСЫ МЕН
ӘДІСТЕМЕСІ
ТЕОРИЯ И МЕТОДИКА ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ ОБЩЕСТВЕННО-
ГУМАНИТАРНЫХ НАУК**

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**NON-LINEAR FORMS OF TEXT AND THEIR ROLE IN DEVELOPING EFL
LEARNERS' SPEECH ORGANIZATION**

Non-linear forms of text, including mind maps, diagrams, charts, and graphic organizers, may help EFL learners organize information before speaking. However, their relationship with speech organization remains insufficiently explored. This study examines how non-linear forms of text relate to schema and support EFL learners' speech organization. It focuses on their relationship with schema, effects on speaking outcomes, and gaps in current research.

The study connects research on non-linear text, schema, and EFL speaking, emphasizing the role of visual organization in preparing learners for spoken production. A qualitative review of 10 sources published between 2019 and 2024 was conducted. Five empirical studies examining mind maps, concept maps, and graphic organizers in relation to speaking outcomes were analyzed together with theoretical and applied sources. Findings were compared and synthesized without statistical analysis.

The review indicates a generally positive relationship between non-linear text use and speech organization. The strongest evidence concerns coherence, fluency, and content organization, with additional benefits reported for accuracy, complexity, vocabulary recall, and willingness to communicate. Effects on pronunciation and pacing are less consistent. Three possible mechanisms were identified: externalization of information structure, reduced planning demands, and facilitated retrieval. However, the evidence remains limited, particularly for non-linear formats beyond mind maps and graphic organizers.

The study contributes to understanding non-linear texts as pre-speaking organizational tools rather than only reading materials. The findings can support more purposeful selection and use of non-linear materials in EFL speaking instruction and provide directions for further research.

Keywords: non-linear text, schema, EFL, speaking skills, speech organization, mind mapping, graphic organizers, fluency, coherence

MAIN PROVISIONS

The study is based on the distinction between continuous and non-linear forms of text and on the view that non-linear texts require learners to locate, compare, and connect information rather than follow a fixed sequence. The work of Kirsch and Mosenthal, the OECD approach to reading literacy, and Aarseth's concept of non-linear text provide the foundation for understanding how the structure of such texts influences the way information is processed. This perspective is complemented by schema theory, which explains how learners organize related knowledge and how graphic organizers can make these relationships visible.

The study also draws on research into the use of visual organizers in EFL speaking. The work of Robillos, Kaldarova and colleagues, Kazemi and Moradi, Feng and colleagues, and Robillos and Phantharakphong demonstrates the potential of mind maps, concept maps, and digital graphic organizers to support different aspects of oral performance. Taken together, these approaches provide the basis for viewing non-linear texts as pedagogical tools that can support the organization of ideas, planning, retrieval, and production of spoken language.

INTRODUCTION

Developing the ability to organize ideas clearly is an important part of EFL speaking. Learners need not only vocabulary and grammatical knowledge but also the ability to select relevant information, connect ideas, and present them logically. Since planning and language production occur simultaneously during speaking, materials that help learners organize ideas before speaking may provide useful support.

One possible source of such support is non-linear forms of text, including tables, charts, diagrams, and mind maps. Unlike continuous texts, non-linear texts allow learners to locate, compare, and connect information in different ways. Their visual structure can make relationships between ideas more explicit and may therefore support schema-related processing. Previous research has shown that graphic organizers can support EFL reading comprehension and schema use.

However, the role of non-linear texts in speaking remains less clear. Existing studies have mainly examined mind maps, concept maps, and digital graphic organizers, reporting positive effects on several speaking outcomes. At the same time, the number of relevant studies is limited, and the relationship between non-linear text, schema, and speech organization has rarely been examined as a connected process.

The object of this study is the use of non-linear forms of text in EFL learning, while the subject is their relationship with schema and learners' speech organization. The aim of the article is to review current research from 2019 to 2024 on how non-linear forms of text support the development of speech organization in EFL learners through the concept of schema.

The study addresses three questions: (1) What is the relationship between non-linear forms of text and schema in current research? (2) What does existing research show about the effect of non-linear text use on EFL learners' speech organization? and (3) What gaps remain in research on this relationship? The working hypothesis is that non-linear texts make schema and relationships between ideas more visible, thereby reducing part of the planning demand during speaking and supporting more organized spoken output.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in bringing together three areas that have largely been examined separately: non-linear text, schema-related processing, and EFL speech organization. Rather than treating non-linear texts only as reading materials or mind-mapping techniques, the study considers their broader potential as tools for organizing spoken ideas. Its significance lies in examining how an external visual structure may support the organization and retrieval of information during language production.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Non-linear forms of text and EFL teaching

Not every text is meant to be read from beginning to end. Some texts, such as a table, a chart, or a mind map are built so the reader can scan, compare, and connect parts in whatever order makes sense to them. This kind of text is usually called *non-linear*, and researchers have studied it for several decades, though under a few different names.

The clearest and most widely used definition comes from Kirsch and Mosenthal, who studied how adults read for everyday tasks. They split texts into two types: *continuous texts*, written as sentences and paragraphs, and *non-continuous texts*, built from lists and organized in a table-like,

or matrix, format [1]. Their point was not just about appearance. Reading a non-continuous text asks the reader to do something different, i.e. to locate specific pieces of information, compare them, and put them together, rather than simply follow a story or an argument from one sentence to the next [1].

The OECD later built its PISA reading framework around the same split between continuous and non-continuous texts, treating the ability to read tables, diagrams, and forms as its own measurable skill, separate from reading ordinary prose [2]. This matters for education generally: if reading a diagram truly is a different skill from reading a paragraph, then teaching materials that only use continuous text may be leaving one whole side of reading ability undeveloped and, as this review will argue, possibly one side of speaking development too.

2. Cognitive mechanisms behind non-linear forms of text comprehension

One more idea is worth adding here, from a more theoretical angle. Aarseth argued that a non-linear text does not have a single, fixed structure the way a paragraph does. Its structure instead depends on how the reader chooses to move through it, what they look at first, what they compare, what they skip [3]. This is a useful way to think about a mind map or a diagram: two students looking at the same one might build slightly different mental pictures, because they each moved through it differently.

This reader-built structure connects directly to schema theory, one explanation for how the mind handles information. A schema is a mental structure that groups related knowledge together, so a person does not process every new fact in isolation. Qi and Jiang studied EFL readers using graphic organizers and found that the organizer displayed a schema directly on the page, so students did not have to build one from scratch while reading [4]. Their comprehension scores improved, and improved faster than those of students working without an organizer.

Yan and Kim tested this connection more directly, training Chinese university students to activate schema using digital mind maps before reading [5]. Their awareness of schema use grew clearly after the training. Reading comprehension scores, however, did not rise by a significant margin [5]. The mind map changed how students approached the text without necessarily changing how well they understood it. This is a gap worth keeping in mind, since it raises a question: does the same pattern hold once non-linear text is used to prepare for speaking, rather than for reading?

3. Non-linear text and speech organization

Different studies test different non-linear tools against different speaking outcomes, but the results converge on one point: organizing ideas visually before speaking changes how the speech comes out, not just how confident the speaker feels. Robillos had university students build a digital mind map before an oral presentation and scored the results on four criteria [6]. Coherence rose significantly; clarity and content rose too, but delivery (pronunciation and pacing) barely moved. Robillos explains this through the mapping process itself: laying ideas out as a diagram let students see the whole structure of their talk at once, so they could catch and fix gaps in logic before speaking, rather than discovering them mid-sentence [6].

Kaldarova et al. tested mind-mapping platforms against IELTS speaking scores and found gains concentrated in fluency and coherence [7]. Their explanation rests on cognitive load theory: a speaker under time pressure has limited attention to split between deciding what to say and how to say it. A mind map handles the "what" in advance, so during the actual speaking task, all of that attention goes toward language production instead of being split [7].

Kazemi and Moradi found gains in speaking accuracy and complexity after concept mapping, and offered a similar but more specific explanation: the map let learners retain the main topics and the relationships between them, so they could organize concepts, plan what to say, and monitor their own speech as they went, instead of doing all three at once from scratch [8].

Feng et al. found that mind mapping raised both willingness to communicate and vocabulary recall, and pointed to a different mechanism than the other three: the visual format helped learners store and retrieve words more easily, which lowered the anxiety of searching for a word mid-sentence - a practical barrier to speaking up, not just an organizational one [9].

Robillos and Phantharakphong linked digital graphic organizers to gains in both critical

thinking and oral expression, arguing that the organizer forced learners to sort essential from unessential ideas before speaking, which shows up afterward as more focused, better-organized speech [10]. Table 1 below summarizes all of the studies reviewed.

Table 1 - Non-linear Tools and Speaking Outcomes

Study	Tool	Outcome	Proposed mechanism
Robillos, 2022	Digital mind map	Coherence, clarity, content improved; delivery unchanged	Seeing the full structure lets students catch logic gaps before speaking
Kaldarova et al., 2024	Mind-mapping platforms	Fluency & coherence improved (IELTS)	Frees attention from content planning during the speaking task itself
Kazemi & Moradi, 2019	Concept mapping	Accuracy, complexity improved	Separates planning from monitoring, instead of doing both at once
Feng et al., 2023	Mind mapping	Willingness to communicate, vocabulary recall improved	Easier word retrieval lowers anxiety about speaking up
Robillos & Phantharakphong, 2020	Digital graphic organizer	Critical thinking, oral expression improved	Forces sorting of essential from unessential ideas beforehand

Four of the five explanations point to the same underlying idea, stated in different words: speaking asks a learner to plan and produce language at the same time, and a non-linear tool completes part of that planning in advance. Feng et al.'s explanation stands apart, locating the benefit in word retrieval and anxiety rather than planning load [9].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article reviews how non-linear forms of text relate to schema and to EFL learners' speech organization. It uses 10 sources: five empirical studies (2019-2024) testing non-linear tools against outcomes like coherence, accuracy, and willingness to communicate; a few foundational theoretical works; and recent applied sources. Sources were found through Google Scholar and open-access journals, using terms like "*non-linear text*," "*graphic organizer*," "*mind mapping*," "*schema*," and "*speaking skills*," then filtered for direct relevance and free full-text access.

The review asks three questions: 1) how non-linear text relates to schema, 2) what current research shows about its effect on speech organization, and 3) what gaps remain. Its working hypothesis: non-linear text makes schema visible on the page, easing speech planning and supporting more organized spoken output. Findings are compared across sources rather than analyzed statistically, given the small number of directly relevant studies.

RESULTS

The analysis of the reviewed literature revealed a generally positive relationship between non-linear forms of text, schema-related processing, and EFL learners' speech organization. The strongest evidence concerns the organization of spoken content, while effects on delivery-related aspects are less consistent.

1. Non-linear Forms of Text and Schema Activation

The findings for RQ1 indicate that non-linear texts can function as external representations of schema. Graphic organizers and mind maps make relationships between ideas visually available, reducing the need for learners to construct the entire structure mentally.

Qi and Jiang found that graphic organizers supported reading comprehension by presenting information in an organized visual structure. Yan and Kim, however, showed that although digital mind-mapping training increased learners' awareness of schema use, it did not significantly improve

reading comprehension. Thus, non-linear texts appear to support schema activation, but increased schema awareness does not automatically lead to better learning outcomes. The key functions of non-linear text in supporting schema-related processing are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 - Functions of Non-linear Text in Schema Activation

Function	Main finding
Visual representation	Makes relationships between ideas explicit
Schema activation	Increases awareness of organizational relationships
Pre-speaking organization	Helps learners arrange ideas before speaking
Retrieval support	May facilitate access to vocabulary and ideas

2. Effects on EFL Learners' Speech Organization

The findings for RQ2 show that the most consistent benefits concern coherence, fluency, and organization of spoken content. Robillos reported improvements in coherence, clarity, and content following the use of digital mapping, while Kaldarova et al. found gains in fluency and coherence. Kazemi and Moradi reported improvements in speaking accuracy and complexity after concept mapping.

Feng et al. additionally found improvements in vocabulary recall and willingness to communicate. However, not all speaking dimensions improved equally. Robillos reported little change in delivery, including pronunciation and pacing. The reported effects across different speaking outcomes are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 - Reported Effects of Non-linear Text Use on Speaking Outcomes

Speaking outcome	Reported finding
Coherence	Improved
Fluency	Improved
Accuracy	Improved
Complexity	Improved
Vocabulary recall	Improved
Willingness to communicate	Improved
Delivery/pronunciation/pacing	Little or no change

Overall, the evidence suggests that non-linear texts are particularly useful as *pre-speaking organizational tools*, rather than as a universal method for improving every aspect of oral performance.

3. Mechanisms Linking Non-linear Texts to Speech Organization

Three main mechanisms emerged from the reviewed studies.

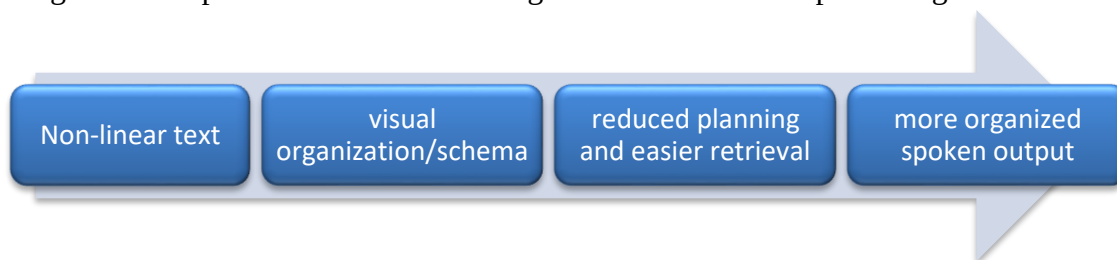
First, *externalization of structure*: non-linear texts make relationships between ideas visible, allowing learners to refer to an external representation while preparing their speech.

Second, *reduction of planning demands*: organizing ideas before speaking may reduce the amount of content planning required during real-time speech production.

Third, *facilitated retrieval*: visual organization may help learners retrieve vocabulary and ideas more easily, potentially supporting willingness to communicate.

The proposed relationship summarized in the Figure 1. The proposed relationship between non-linear text, schema activation, and speech organization is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 - Proposed Mechanism Linking Non-linear Text to Speech Organization



The evidence, however, does not directly test this entire pathway in a single study.

4. Gaps in the Existing Evidence

The findings for RQ3 reveal four main gaps. First, the number of directly relevant empirical studies is limited. Second, existing research focuses mainly on mind maps, concept maps, and graphic organizers, while other non-linear formats such as charts, maps, brochures, timetables, and diagrams remain underexplored. Third, studies use different measures of speaking performance, making direct comparison difficult. Finally, the relationship between schema activation and speech organization has rarely been tested directly.

Thus, existing research suggests a positive relationship between non-linear text use and aspects of speech organization, but further research is needed to examine how different non-linear formats can systematically support EFL speaking development.

DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that the main value of non-linear texts is their ability to make the structure of information visible, which can help learners organize their speech. Previous research has mainly linked graphic organizers and mind maps with schema activation and reading comprehension. The present synthesis suggests that this support may also extend to speaking, as learners can use the visual structure to organize ideas before producing language. However, the findings of Yan and Kim show that greater awareness of schema does not automatically lead to better comprehension. This suggests that the way non-linear texts are used in a learning task is as important as the visual format itself.

The different speaking outcomes also show that non-linear texts do not improve all aspects of speaking equally. The strongest evidence concerns coherence, fluency, and the organization of content, which are closely related to planning ideas. In contrast, the limited improvement in delivery reported by Robillos suggests that visual organization alone is unlikely to improve pronunciation or pacing. Feng et al.'s findings also suggest that non-linear texts may help with vocabulary retrieval, making it easier for learners to access words while speaking. Thus, their value may come from both better organization of ideas and easier access to language.

Finally, most existing studies focus on mind maps, concept maps, and graphic organizers, while other non-linear formats remain less studied. This suggests that future research should move beyond the general question of whether non-linear texts support speaking and examine which formats are most suitable for particular speaking tasks. For example, maps may support route descriptions, while charts or diagrams may help learners compare information or explain relationships. This task-specific approach could make the pedagogical use of non-linear texts more precise and effective.

CONCLUSION

This review examined the relationship between non-linear forms of text, schema, and EFL learners' speech organization. The findings suggest that non-linear texts can support the organization of spoken content by making relationships between ideas visible and helping learners prepare their speech before speaking. The strongest evidence concerns coherence, fluency, and content organization, while effects on delivery-related aspects such as pronunciation and pacing appear

more limited.

The review also suggests that the benefits of non-linear texts may result from more than one process. Visual organization can reduce the need to plan ideas during speaking and may also support vocabulary retrieval. However, the limited number of empirical studies and the strong focus on mind maps and graphic organizers mean that broader conclusions cannot yet be made.

Overall, non-linear texts show potential as a practical resource for EFL speaking instruction, particularly at the planning and organization stage. Further research should examine a wider range of non-linear formats and determine how specific formats can be matched to particular speaking tasks and learner needs.

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Бейсызықты мәтін формалары және олардың ағылшын тілін үйренушілердің ауызша сөйлеуін ұйымдастырудағы рөлі

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Интеллект-карталар, диаграммалар, графиктер және графикалық ұйымдастырушыларды қамтитын бейсызықты мәтін формалары ағылшын тілін шет тілі

ретінде үйренушілерге ауызша сөйлеу алдында ақпаратты ұйымдастыруға көмектесуі мүмкін. Алайда олардың ауызша сөйлеуді ұйымдастырумен өзара байланысы жеткілікті зерттелмеген. Бұл зерттеудің мақсаты – бейсызықты мәтін формаларының білім схемаларымен өзара байланысын және олардың ағылшын тілін шет тілі ретінде үйренушілердің ауызша сөйлеуін ұйымдастырудағы рөлін қарастыру. Зерттеуде бейсызықты мәтін формаларының білім схемаларымен байланысы, олардың ауызша сөйлеу нәтижелеріне әсері және қазіргі зерттеулердегі олқылықтар қарастырылады.

Зерттеу бейсызықты мәтін, білім схемалары және ағылшын тілін шет тілі ретінде үйренушілердің ауызша сөйлеуі бойынша зерттеулерді біріктіре отырып, білім алушыларды ауызша сөйлеуге дайындауда ақпаратты визуалды ұйымдастырудың рөліне назар аударады. 2019-2024 жылдар аралығында жарияланған 10 дереккөзге сапалық шолу жүргізілді. Интеллект-карталардың, концептуалдық карталардың және графикалық ұйымдастырушылардың ауызша сөйлеу нәтижелерімен байланысын зерттеген бес эмпирикалық зерттеу теориялық және қолданбалы дереккөздермен бірге талданды. Нәтижелер статистикалық талдаусыз салыстырылып, жинақталды.

Шолу бейсызықты мәтіндерді қолдану мен ауызша сөйлеуді ұйымдастыру арасында жалпы алғанда оң байланыс бар екенін көрсетті. Ең айқын нәтижелер сөйлеудің байланыстылығы, еркіндігі және мазмұнды ұйымдастыруына қатысты байқалды. Сонымен қатар сөйлеудің дәлдігіне, күрделілігіне, сөздік қорды еске түсіруге және коммуникацияға дайын болуға қатысты қосымша артықшылықтар анықталды. Айтылым мен сөйлеу қарқынына әсері біркелкі емес. Үш ықтимал механизм анықталды: ақпарат құрылымын сыртқы түрде көрсету, жоспарлауға қойылатын талаптарды азайту және ақпаратты еске түсіруді жеңілдету. Сонымен қатар дәлелдер базасы шектеулі болып отыр, әсіресе интеллект-карталар мен графикалық ұйымдастырушылардан басқа бейсызықты форматтарға қатысты.

Зерттеу бейсызықты мәтіндерді тек оқу материалдары ретінде ғана емес, ауызша сөйлеуді алдын ала ұйымдастыру құралдары ретінде түсінуге үлес қосады. Алынған нәтижелер ағылшын тілін шет тілі ретінде оқыту барысында бейсызықты материалдарды неғұрлым мақсатты таңдауға және пайдалануға мүмкіндік береді, сондай-ақ одан әрі зерттеулердің бағыттарын айқындайды.

Тірек сөздер: бейсызықты мәтін, білім схемасы, ағылшын тілі, ауызша сөйлеу, ауызша сөйлеуді ұйымдастыру, интеллект-карталар, графикалық ұйымдастырушылар, еркін сөйлеу, сөйлеудің байланыстылығы

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Нелинейные формы текста и их роль в развитии организации устной речи у изучающих английский язык как иностранный

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Нелинейные формы текста, включая интеллект-карты, диаграммы, графики и графические органайзеры, могут помогать изучающим английский язык как иностранный организовывать информацию перед устным высказыванием. Однако их взаимосвязь с организацией устной речи остается недостаточно изученной. Целью данного исследования является изучение взаимосвязи нелинейных форм текста со схемами знаний и их роли в организации устной речи изучающих английский язык как иностранный. В исследовании рассматриваются взаимосвязь нелинейных форм текста со схемами знаний, их влияние на результаты устной речи и пробелы в современных исследованиях.

Исследование объединяет работы, посвященные нелинейному тексту, схемам знаний и устной речи на английском языке как иностранном, с акцентом на роль визуальной организации информации в подготовке обучающихся к устному высказыванию. Проведен качественный обзор 10 источников, опубликованных в период с 2019 по 2024 год. Были проанализированы пять эмпирических исследований, посвященных использованию интеллект-карт, концептуальных карт и графических органайзеров в связи с результатами устной речи, а также теоретические и прикладные источники. Результаты сопоставлялись и обобщались без применения статистического анализа.

Обзор показывает в целом положительную взаимосвязь между использованием нелинейных форм текста и организацией устной речи. Наиболее убедительные результаты получены в отношении связности, беглости и организации содержания высказывания. Дополнительные преимущества отмечены в точности, сложности речи, воспроизведении лексики и готовности к коммуникации. Влияние на произношение и темп речи является менее последовательным. Выделены три возможных механизма: внешнее представление структуры информации, снижение требований к планированию и облегчение извлечения информации. Вместе с тем доказательная база остается ограниченной, особенно в отношении нелинейных форм, отличных от интеллект-карт и графических органайзеров.

Исследование способствует пониманию нелинейных текстов как инструментов предварительной организации устного высказывания, а не только как материалов для чтения. Полученные результаты могут способствовать более целенаправленному отбору и использованию нелинейных материалов в обучении устной речи на английском языке как

иностранном и определить направления дальнейших исследований.

Ключевые слова: нелинейный текст, схема знаний, английский язык как иностранный, устная речь, организация устной речи, интеллект-карты, графические органайзеры, беглость речи, связность речи

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